

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 5-7, 18 and 19 are pending in the present application. Claims 2, 3 and 5 have been amended. Claims 1, 4 and 8-12 have been canceled.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. 119

During a telephone conversation on April 7, 2005, Examiner Fenty confirmed that the certified copy of Japanese Priority Application 2003-002476 initially filed on July 12, 2004, has been lost within the U.S. Patent Office. The Examiner requested resubmission of a certified copy of the priority document.

Accordingly, a Claim of Priority Letter and a certified copy of Japanese Priority Application 2003-002476 have been filed concurrently herewith. **The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge receipt of the certified copy of the priority document, and to acknowledge that the Claim for Priority Under 35 U.S.C. 119 is complete.**

Drawings

The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge receipt and acceptance of the Drawing Replacement Sheets filed along with the Amendment dated January 18, 2005.

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1, 4 and 8-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by the Hino et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,873,053).

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants respectfully note the Examiner's acknowledgment that claims 2, 3 and 5-7 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Responsive to the Examiner's acknowledgement of allowable subject matter, claims 2, 3 and 5 have been respectively amended to be in independent form, merely to advance prosecution of this application. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to acknowledge that claims 2, 3 and 5-7 are allowed.

Conclusion

As noted above, claims 2, 3 and 5 have been respectively amended to be in independent form as including the features of base claim 1. Since claims 2, 3 and 5 have merely been amended to be in independent form, and have not been amended to further distinguish over any of the relied upon prior art, the above noted amendments to claims 2, 3 and 5 should not be construed as narrowing scope within the meaning of *Festo*.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the

corresponding rejection, and to pass the claims of the present application to issue, for at least the above reasons.

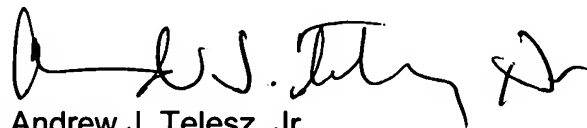
In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, please contact Andrew J. Telesz, Jr. (Reg. No. 33,581) at (571) 283-0720 in the Washington, D.C. area, to discuss these matters.

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicants hereby petition for an extension of two (2) months to September 21, 2005, for the period in which to file a response to the outstanding Office Action. The required fee of \$450.00 should be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0238.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment for any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0238.

Respectfully submitted,

VOLENTINE FRANCOS & WHITT, P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. J. Telesz, Jr.", followed by a stylized flourish or mark.

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